

CORRESPONDENCE WITH A FUNDAMENTALIST BIBLE TEACHER WHO DENOUNCES THE KING JAMES ONLY & RECEIVED TEXT ONLY POSITION

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Following is some correspondence I have conducted in recent weeks with a man who used to teach at Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri. The correspondence was engendered by the publication in March of two articles on Bible preservation via the Fundamental Baptist Information Service. (See the Way of Life web site.)

I have decided not to give my correspondent's name. Instead, I am going to call him "ECLECTIC TEXT MAN." I believe this properly describes his position. It is the same basic position that I was taught in Greek class at Tennessee Temple Bible School in the mid-1970s. "Eclectic Text Man" does not believe that the preserved Word of God can be found in any Bible or Greek text that has ever existed since the second century. In a report that he wrote in 1996 entitled "Westcott & Hort vs. Textus Receptus: Which Is Superior" (Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1996), he says:

"The New Testament was inspired by God, and came from the pens of its writers or their amanuenses in infallible form, free from any defect of any sort, including scribal mistakes. However, God in His providence did not chose to protect that infallible original text from alterations and corruptions in the copying and printing process" (p. 1).

As to what "Eclectic Text Man" believes about the Bible today in a practical sense, it is as murky as the condition of current textual scholarship. He says that the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament and the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament are generally superior to the Received Text, and the New International Version and the American Standard Version are generally superior to the King James Bible, but none can be trusted. He says one must evaluate all variants on a reading by reading basis, examine the evidence for and against each reading, analyze the arguments of the various schools of thought, "and only then a judgment made." That is not good news for most Christians, since they could not possibly do what he is suggesting. There is not one Bible-believing Christian out of 10,000 who could even try to do what "Eclectic Text Man" is suggesting. Even many preachers who have a basic knowledge of Greek or even Hebrew have a difficult time studying and understanding the obscure theories and extremely complex, often enigmatic arguments of the various schools of thought in the field of textual criticism. Therefore, "Eclectic Text Man" is putting the average Christian (including the average preacher) at the mercy of textual scholars to tell them what parts of the King James Bible (or any other Bible) can be trusted and what parts are corruptions and mistakes. Since the scholars are hopelessly divided and since the field of textual criticism has been in a state of constant flux for 200 years, with the textual critics often denouncing and contradicting one another, that is sad news indeed.

Of course, we don't have to follow the "Eclectic Text Man" position, praise the Lord! I, for one, don't believe "Eclectic Text Man" is right. I have studied this issue intently for almost 20 years. I have spent many thousands of dollars to obtain the important materials from all sides of this issue from the last two centuries for my library. And I am convinced that modern textual criticism is heresy that is built upon the foundation of 19th-century German rationalism, and I do not hesitate for a moment to reject it.

The following communication with "Eclectic Text Man" covers many of the important points in the debate that is raging among some fundamental Baptists today. Schools like Fairhaven Baptist College, Pensacola Christian College, Maryland Baptist Bible Seminary, Midwestern Baptist College, Tabernacle Baptist Bible College, Trinity Baptist College, Crown College, Landmark

Baptist College and Seminary, Mid-Central Baptist College, and Heritage Baptist University have aligned themselves boldly on the side of the King James Bible and the Received Text against the critical text position, while organizations like the “Coalition for the Defense of the Scriptures” have aligned themselves boldly against what they label the “King James Only” position.

“ECLECTIC TEXT MAN”: Dear Dave: I will admit that my tone has been sarcastic in recent correspondence. I do not respond well to being called a follower of modernists and neo-evangelicals, a charge which has not a shred of truth.

DAVID CLOUD: Thanks for the reply. You have done a good job in outlining why you don’t believe the King James Bible and its Received Text is the preserved Word of God, but I don’t buy it. I have heard those arguments repeatedly for 20 years. My study of the Bible confirms me in the position I hold.

I am still puzzled and amazed by your approach to Bible texts and versions. You are so extremely zealous to prove there are errors in all Bibles. You are willing to spend hours and hours trying to convince God’s people of this. You grow very fierce toward men who don’t believe there are errors in the KJV or its Received Text. To me that is an exceedingly strange objective for a man who claims at the same time to believe the Bible (at least in theory). Even if it is true, as you say, that many or even most “orthodox Bible theologians” this century have not held that the KJV and the TR are without error, I don’t recall many of them spending so much effort trying to prove to people that all existing Bibles and texts contain errors, going out of their way to do that, making it one of their goals in life.

I am not surprised that you took offense at my charge that in the Bible text field you are following Modernists and New Evangelicals. It is a hard accusation. As for there being no shred of truth in the charge, though, that is not the case. Through diligent and long study, I have come to the conviction that modern textual criticism is a form of rationalism and infidelity. The men who developed the theories of textual criticism in an attempt to overthrow that “tyrannous” Received Text (as some of them called it), were rationalists. Those theories were not developed by strong Bible-believing men. Men like the Baptist A.T. Robertson and Presbyterian B.B. Warfield did not develop textual criticism, but merely rehashed and passed along that which they received from the rationalistic fathers in this field. The vast majority of the men who wrote the influential works on textual criticism in the 19th century were rationalists. The same is true today. The vast majority of them are Modernists and New Evangelicals at best (Fuller Seminary, etc.).

This is not merely the idea of a fundamental Baptist “King James Onlyite” like me, though. A wide variety of Bible-believing men from the past two centuries have made the same observation. In my article “Textual Criticism and Infidelity,” which I am publishing today via the Fundamental Baptist Information Service, I document this charge. It is documented even more extensively in my 460-page book *For Love of the Bible: The Battle for the King James Version and the Received Text from 1800 to Present* (1995, Way of Life Literature).

Here I will give two examples to illustrate what I am saying, and both are from 19th-century Britain. It was from these men that I first began to understand the rationalistic position of textual criticism. Several years ago, I dedicated myself for several months to researching the battle for the Bible in 19th-century Britain. Those men were much closer to the theological battles surrounding the origin of modern textual criticism. Many men of God in that day understood that textual criticism is intimately connected with theological modernism. The example I will give is THE BIBLE LEAGUE of England. This organization was formed in 1892 to resist the tide of apostasy that was sweeping across the Protestant landscape in late 19th century Britain. In an article detailing the history of the Bible League, S.M. Houghton connects its origin with the “Downgrade Controversy” that C.H. Spurgeon fought in the 1880s and 1890s. Spurgeon’s death in 1892 galvanized the convictions of some in the battle against Rationalism. The Bible League was formed

later that same year. The Bible League Quarterly began to be published in 1912. They describe the spread of apostasy from the 1890s until now in these words:

“Spurgeon’s days saw apostasy as a trickle; by the time of the Bible League’s foundation [1892] it had become a stream; shortly it expanded to a river, and today it has become a veritable ocean of unbelief. For the most of men the ancient landmarks have disappeared from sight. Life upon earth has become a voyage on an uncharted ocean in a cockle-shell boat ‘tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.’ Never before in human history has the ‘sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive’ (Eph. 4:14) been so greatly in evidence. ‘Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived’ (2 Tim. 3:13)” (S.M. Houghton, “The Bible League: Its Origin and Its Aims” 1971, *Truth Unchanged, Unchanging*, Abingdon: The Bible League, 1984).

Men associated with the Bible League understood that the stew of modern textual criticism was cooked up in this pot of end-time theological confusion.

“In the eighteenth century Religious Rationalism was begotten in Germany and began to spread in its Universities. It has influenced and debased the theological thought in almost the whole of Protestant Christendom. ... The Father of this new revolutionary attitude to the Word of the Lord and the Lord of the Word was J.S. Semler (1725-91), Professor of Theology at Halle. One of his pupils, J.J. Griesbach (1745-1812) was appointed Professor of the New Testament at Jena in 1775. ... It should not be surprising, nor should it be overlooked, that **GRIESBACH, INFLUENCED FROM HIS UNDERGRADUATE DAYS BY THE RISING TIDE OF RATIONALISM SWEEPING OVER HIS COUNTRY, WAS A FOE OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. HE ABANDONED THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS, AND CONSTRUCTED A NEW GREEK NEW TESTAMENT TEXT**” (emphasis added) (D.A. Thompson, *The Controversy Concerning the Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel according to Mark*, Surrey: The Bible Christian Unity Fellowship, pp. 39-40; reprint of four articles which appeared in *The Bible League Quarterly*, London, 1973).

The Bible League recognized that the Received Text was first rejected not by a Bible-believing evangelical, but by a Modernist, by a foe of orthodox Christianity! John P. Thackway (1950-), who has been Editor of the Quarterly since 1993, told us that since its inception the Bible League “has stood for the TR and AV position, and from time to time since the Quarterly was first published in 1912 articles relative to this would have appeared.”

I will give one other illustration of the men who have understood the rationalistic foundation of modern textual criticism. That old British war-horse JOHN BURGON (1813-1888), who held several high degrees from Oxford University and who was one of the foremost biblical scholars of his day, understood this perfectly well. Three false movements were eating at Britain’s spiritual foundation in the nineteenth century--Darwinism, Modernism, and Romanism—and Burgon stood decidedly against all three. One of the hallmarks of Burgon’s ministry was his exalted view of Holy Scripture. It was his love for the Bible that produced his fierce opposition toward every form of rationalism. Burgon gave Modernism absolutely no quarter. He refused to be quiet about it. He refused to treat it kindly. He refused to be patient with it. When articles began to be published at Oxford in 1860 casting doubt upon the inerrancy of Scripture, Burgon, who had been appointed the same year as Select Preacher of the University, presented a series of messages in defense of the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible. I certainly am not sympathetic with much that Anglicanism stands for, and Burgon was an Anglican, but there is no doubt in my mind that this man loved Jesus Christ and the Book of God and he hated the enemies of Christ with great passion.

An excerpt from Sermon II illustrates Burgon’s zeal for the supernatural inspiration of the Bible and against modern biblical criticism:

DESTROY MY CONFIDENCE IN THE BIBLE AS AN HISTORICAL RECORD, AND YOU DESTROY MY CONFIDENCE IN IT ALTOGETHER; FOR BY FAR THE LARGEST PART OF THE BIBLE IS AN HISTORICAL RECORD. If the Creation of Man,—the longevity of the Patriarchs,—the account of the Deluge;—if these be not true histories, what is to be said of the lives of Abraham, of Jacob, of Joseph, of Moses, of Joshua, of David,—of our Saviour Christ Himself? ... Will you

then reject one miracle and retain another? Impossible! You can make no reservation, even in favour of the Incarnation of our Lord,—the most adorable of all miracles, as it is the very keystone of our Christian hope. **EITHER, WITH THE BEST AND WISEST OF ALL AGES, YOU MUST BELIEVE THE WHOLE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE; OR, WITH THE NARROW-MINDED INFIDEL, YOU MUST DISBELIEVE THE WHOLE. THERE IS NO MIDDLE COURSE OPEN TO YOU** (Burgon, Sermon II, p. 46).

What exactly did Burgon believe about the Bible's inspiration? Consider this statement from Sermon III:

I am asked whether I believe the words of the Bible to be inspired,—I answer, To be sure I do,—every one of them: and every syllable likewise. Do not you?—Where,—(if it be a fair question,)—Where do you, in your wisdom, stop? The book, you allow, is inspired. How about the chapters? How about the verses? Do you stop at the verses, and not go on to the words? ... **No, Sirs! THE BIBLE (BE PERSUADED) IS THE VERY UTTERANCE OF THE ETERNAL;—AS MUCH GOD'S WORD, AS IF HIGH HEAVEN WERE OPEN, AND WE HEARD GOD SPEAKING TO US WITH HUMAN VOICE.** Every book of it, is inspired alike; and **is inspired entirely.** ... **THE BIBLE IS NONE OTHER THAN THE VOICE OF HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE! EVERY BOOK OF IT,—EVERY CHAPTER OF IT,—EVERY VERSE OF IT,—EVERY WORD OF IT,—EVERY SYLLABLE OF IT,—(WHERE ARE WE TO STOP?)—EVERY LETTER OF IT—IS THE DIRECT UTTERANCE OF THE MOST HIGH!** ... 'Well spake the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of' the many blessed Men who wrote it.—**The Bible is none other than the Word of God: not some part of it, more, some part of it, less; but all alike, the utterance of Him who sitteth upon the Throne;—absolute,—faultless,—unerring,—supreme!** (Sermon III, pp. 75,76,89).

Oxford University was the most exalted institution of higher learning in all of Britain. What we see in the previous excerpts is one of the most brilliant scholars of the nineteenth century boldly testifying of his faith in an infallible Bible before the student body of this august university. We can be sure that such an uncompromising testimony has not been heard at that university in this entire century. Burgon's views did not prevail. His earnest pleas were ignored. The soul-destroying gloom of rationalism settled over Oxford as it has over much of Christianity. This is the apostasy of the last hours. Modern textual criticism has worked hand-in-hand with rationalistic apostasy since its inception.

Burgon dedicated his brilliant scholarship to the task of defeating heretical views of the Bible. He made several tours of European libraries, examining and collating New Testament manuscripts wherever he went. He visited the Vatican Library in 1860 to examine the Vaticanus. In 1862, he traveled to Mt. Sinai to inspect manuscripts at St. Catherine's. Edward Hills notes the purpose of these travels: "Being driven by the desire to get to the bottom of the false statements being made by the reigning Critics of his day, Burgon devoted the last 30 years of his life to disprove them. Believing firmly that God had providentially preserved the true text of the New Testament, he set out to discover how the depraved and corrupt readings developed. This required him to travel widely" (E.F. Hills, "A Biographical Sketch of the Life of Burgon," *Unholy Hands on the Bible: Vol. 1*, Jay Green, ed., p. xix).

John Burgon observed a close kinship between biblical criticism and textual criticism. These are sometimes called higher and lower criticism. He said:

"That which distinguishes Sacred Science from every other Science which can be named is that it is Divine, and has to do with a Book which is inspired; that is, whose true Author is God. ... It is chiefly from inattention to this circumstance that misconception prevails in that department of Sacred Science known as 'Textual Criticism'" (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 9).

Burgon understood that modern textual criticism is not built upon a foundation of faith in the Bible as God's supernatural, infallible Word. He was right. Burgon understood something about modern textual criticism that the defenders of the eclectic textual approach cannot see.

I realize that Burgon did not believe exactly in every detail what I believe about the KJV and its Received Text, but what he believed is vastly closer to the “King James Only” position than to the eclectic textual criticism position. John Burgon exalted the King James Bible above all other English versions, and he maintained that the Received Text was, apart from minor improvements he felt could be made, the preserved Word of God. In describing the King James Bible, Burgon spoke of “the living freshness, and elastic freedom, and HABITUAL FIDELITY of the Grand Old Version which we inherited from our Fathers, and which has sustained the spiritual life of the Church of England, and of all English-speaking Christians, for 350 years” (Revision Revised, p. 225). He encouraged his readers to “cling the closer to THE PRICELESS TREASURE WHICH WAS BEQUEATHED TO THEM BY THE PIETY AND WISDOM OF THEIR FATHERS” (Revision Revised, p. 232).

In my book *For Love of the Bible*, I have given many other examples of men in 19th-century Britain who understood the rationalistic nature of modern textual criticism.

Crossing the ocean to North America, we find that the same battle was raging. Rationalism was sweeping into seminaries and Bible colleges, and many staunch defenders of biblical inspiration saw an affinity between biblical criticism and textual criticism. ROBERT L. DABNEY (1820-1898) was a noted American Presbyterian scholar who boldly opposed modernistic views of the Bible in the nineteenth century. He also stood for the Received Text and understood the rationalistic background of modern textual criticism. Dabney warned that Evangelicals who accepted the modern text were adopting it “FROM THE MINT OF INFIDEL RATIONALISM” (Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Discussions Evangelical and Theological*, pp. 361; this first appeared in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871). I know for a fact that the Evangelicals of that day who were following textual criticism took great offense at Dabney’s charge, just like men like James Boice or James White do today when charged with adopting textual criticism from “the mint of infidel rationalism.” I praise the Lord for men like Dabney who are willing to take a stand for the truth even when it offends people. Dabney understood that the fathers of textual criticism lacked the common sense to be able to properly use the knowledge they were gaining.

“We call these the opinions now fashionable; for those who watch the course of this art are aware that there is as truly a fashion in it, infecting its votaries, as in ladies’ bonnets, medicines or cravats [neck scarves]. ... The minds for which criticism retains its fascination are usually of that peculiar and ‘crotchety’ type found among antiquarians. The intelligent reader is, therefore, not surprised to find, along with much labor and learning, **a ‘plentiful lack’ of sober and convincing common sense. ... We shall find them continually varying, each one obnoxious to grave objections, and the question still unsettled. ... Their common traits may be said to be an almost contemptuous dismissal of the received text, as unworthy not only of confidence, but almost of notice**” (emphasis added) (Dabney, pp. 350,52,54).

In my article “Textual Criticism and Infidelity,” I give many other examples of men of God who have understood that modern textual criticism is built upon rationalistic principles.

I then document the rationalistic position of the fathers of modern textual criticism, including Richard Simon, John Mill, Richard Bentley, Johann Bengel, Johann Wettstein, Johann Semler, Johann Griesbach, Karl Lachmann, Friedrich Tischendorf, B.F. Westcott, and F.J.A. Hort.

JOHANN JAKOB GRIESBACH (1745-1812), for example, was one of the earliest fathers of modern textual criticism. Marvin R. Vincent says, “With Griesbach, really critical texts may be said to have begun” (Marvin Vincent, *A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 1899, p. 100). As noted earlier, Griesbach was a convinced student of one of the fathers of Modernism, JOHANN SALOMO SEMLER (1725-91). Griesbach was influenced from his undergraduate days by the rising tide of Rationalism sweeping over Germany and “was a foe of orthodox Christianity” (D.A. Thompson, *The Controversy Concerning the Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to Mark*,

p. 40). Both Semler and Griesbach rejected the deity of Jesus Christ and the supernatural infallibility of Holy Scripture. Semler was the father of the wicked accommodation theory, believing that Jesus Christ and the Apostles accommodated themselves to the prejudices, errors and superstitions of their time. Semler “was the leader of the reaction in Germany against the traditional views of the canon of Scripture” (Vincent, p. 92). Griesbach was also associated with the Modernist W.M.L. de Wette and wrote the preface to de Wette’s *Contributions to Old Testament Introduction* (1806-07). In this work de Wette, another of the fathers of Old Testament criticism, denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and claimed that the book of Deuteronomy was not written until the reign of king Josiah.

Semler, who looked upon the Bible as a man-made book, provided Griesbach with some of his textual theories. Semler, for example, was the father of the recension theory that claims the Received text is an editorial recension created centuries after the Apostles. Another Griesbach theory adopted from Semler claimed that textual readings favoring theological orthodoxy should be suspect (because they denied biblical preservation and falsely believed the orthodox readings were created by textual editors during the early centuries). In other words, according to this principle, if there is a reading in the Received Text that plainly teaches the Godhead of Christ or some other foundational doctrine of the New Testament faith, that reading should be held suspect in favor of a variant in some old manuscript that lessens or does away with the doctrine. This, my friends, is topsy-turvy thinking! Griesbach also held that “the shorter reading (under most circumstances) is to be preferred to the more verbose.” It does not therefore appear surprising that the critical edition of the Greek New Testament is much shorter than the Received Text. Griesbach was the first to declare Mark 16:9-20 spurious and to omit it from the 1796 edition of his Greek text.

These theories were adopted by Griesbach and later by Westcott and Hort, who said they venerated the name of Griesbach “above that of every other textual critic of the New Testament” (Introduction, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, p. 185). Metzger reminds us that Westcott and Hort did not collate any manuscripts or provide a critical apparatus; rather they “refined the critical methodology developed by Griesbach, Lachmann, and others, and applied it rigorously” (Metzger, p. 129). Griesbach was the first to begin abandoning the Received Text to construct a new Greek text that contained many of the novelties later popularized by Westcott and Hort.

Griesbach’s textual theories were boldly rejected by most Protestants and Baptists of that day. Kenyon acknowledges that even textual scholars such as Matthaei, Birch, and Scholz continued to adhere to the Received Text and “repudiated the doctrine of Griesbach” (Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, p. 177). An example is Frederick Nolan, who, in 1815, published *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament*, in which the Greek manuscripts are newly classed, the integrity of the Authorised Text vindicated, and the various readings traced to their origin was published in 1815. As the title suggests, this 576-page volume was a defense of the text underlying the Authorized Version. Nolan said, “... it shall be my object to vindicate those important passages of the Received Text which have been rejected from the Scripture Canon, on the principles of the German method of classification” (p. 43). Among the several passages that he thus vindicated are 1 Timothy 3:16 and 1 John 5:7. Nolan defended the Received Text on the basis of faith and theological purity. He opposed the critics of his day who were disparaging the work of Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza in a manner mimicked by today’s modern version proponents.

Though Bible-believing men of the early 19th century rejected Griesbach and his textual theories, he was well received by the Christ-denying Unitarians. This is stated plainly in *A History of Unitarianism in Transylvania, England and America*.

"[Thomas] Belsham was busily occupied in his own field in London. As minister at Essex Street he was looked to as practically the leader and mouthpiece of the Unitarians. Thus in his sermons he not only powerfully maintained the Unitarian cause, and expounded its doctrines, but also discussed in the light of liberal principles certain questions of national policy, or measures debated in Parliament ... But HIS PREDOMINANT INTEREST AT THIS PERIOD WAS IN THE PREPARATION OF A NEW VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, BASED UPON A GREEK TEXT EMBODYING THE RESULTS OF RECENT CRITICISM. A project for a work of this sort had been proposed by [Joseph] Priestley in 1789, and was well advanced toward completion, when an important part of the manuscript was destroyed in the Birmingham Riots in 1791. Later in the same year, WHEN THE UNITARIAN BOOK SOCIETY WAS FORMED, THE TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS MADE ONE OF ITS MAIN OBJECTS. After some five years' delay it was decided not to make an independent version, but to adopt the excellent one [this was the opinion of the Unitarian author of this history] of Archbishop William Newcome, Primate of Ireland, as a basis, CHIEFLY BECAUSE IT FOLLOWED GRIESBACH'S TEXT, and to accompany it with an introduction and notes. The plan was taken up with ardor, and the work was published in 1808, in three sizes, and later in several editions; and it was at once reprinted in America (Boston, 1909), where Unitarianism was already incubating. IT INCLUDED A VALUABLE INTRODUCTION ON THE PROGRESS AND PRINCIPLES OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM, ANTICIPATING MANY JUDGMENTS LATER ADOPTED IN THE REVISED VERSION OF 1881; BUT DREW THE FIRE OF THE ORTHODOX BY OMITTING AS LATE INTERPOLATIONS SEVERAL PASSAGES TRADITIONALLY CITED AS PILLARS OF TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE. [Examples of these omissions were the removal of the word "God" in 1 Timothy 3:16 and the deletion of 1 John 5:7.] Belsham had taken the leading part in the editing of the work, and he regarded it with great satisfaction. It was widely circulated in Unitarian quarters; but in spite of its presenting a much more correct text, many strictures upon it were passed even by Unitarians, while to the orthodox its notes gave much offence, and by them it was generally scorned as a sectarian work, 'The Unitarian New Testament,' though it was never officially adopted even by the Unitarians" (Earl Morse Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism in Transylvania, England, and America*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952, pp. 338,339).

Griesbach was also loved by Modernists. For example, Joseph Buckminster "persuaded the officials at Harvard College in 1809 to publish an American edition of Griesbach's critical Greek New Testament, because he saw its value in promoting text criticism, in his opinion, 'a most powerful weapon to be used against the supporters of verbal inspiration'" (Theodore Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, p. 2).

Modern version defenders today often claim that there are no doctrinal issues at stake in the textual variances, but the Unitarians and Modernists in the 19th century understood plainly that this is not the case. They understood very well that the theories of modern textual criticism produced a New Testament text that supported their heresies better than the Received Text. In my new book *Myths about Modern Bible Versions* (currently at the printer) I trace the intimate connection between Unitarianism and the critical Greek text. The theories of modern textual criticism and the rejection of the Received Text were fathered in this demonic atmosphere.

Thus, at the beginning of the 19th century, Bible-believing Christians rejected the critical text as heretical, but the Unitarians and Modernists joyfully received the critical Greek text because it supported their doctrinal heresies pertaining to the Trinity and Christ's deity, and also because the textual variety weakened the authority of Scripture. By the end of the 19th century, though, apostasy had so leavened many of the denominations that the Westcott-Hort Greek, which was built upon the Griesbach text and which contained the same type of doctrinal corruptions (in fact, the Westcott-Hort text was more radical and was farther removed from the Received Text), found wide acceptance. Those today who deny that the critical Greek text is less doctrinally sound than the Received Text, are flying in the face of the facts. The old Unitarians understood the doctrinal differences between the texts. They rejected the Received Text because they understood that it defeated their heresies. They made the translation of a new Bible based upon the critical text a top priority. For those who have ears to hear, this speaks volumes.

B.F. WESTCOTT (1825-1901) and F.J.A. HORT (1828-1892), Anglican professors at Cambridge University, were responsible for taking the principles of Griesbach, Lachmann, and other fathers of

modern textual criticism and fashioning them into a package of theories for the overthrow of the Received Text, which they labeled “vile.” They produced such a Greek Testament and secretly introduced it to the committee that was charged with revising the English Bible in Britain in the late 1800s. The resulting English Revised New Testament of 1881 followed (not in every detail, but in large part) the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament. (The committee had not been charged with revising the Greek text but only with updating the English, and when their work was published, they came under widespread condemnation for exceeding the authority of their appointment.)

That Westcott and Hort were infected with the rationalistic approach to the Bible shared by other fathers of textual criticism has been observed by many scholarly men of God.

Zane Hodges noted Westcott and Hort’s apostasy: “The charge of rationalism is easily substantiated for Westcott and Hort and may be demonstrated from direct statements found in their introduction to The New Testament in the Original Greek. To begin with, Westcott and Hort are clearly unwilling to commit themselves to the inerrancy of the original Scriptures” (Hodges, “Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January 1971).

Dr. Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in textual criticism from Harvard, understood the rationalistic platform from which Westcott and Hort worked:

[I]n 1881 B.F. Westcott (1825-1901) and F.J.A. Hort (1828-1892) published their celebrated *Introduction* in which they endeavored to settle the New Testament text on the basis of this new information. They propounded the theory that the original New Testament text has survived in almost perfect condition in these two manuscripts, especially in the Vaticanus. This theory attained almost immediately a tremendous popularity, being accepted everywhere both by liberals and conservatives. Liberals liked it because it represented the latest thing in the science of N.T. textual criticism. Conservatives liked it because it seemed to grant them that security for which they were seeking. But since this security had no foundation in faith, it has not proved lasting. **FOR IN THE WORKING OUT OF THEIR THEORY, WESTCOTT AND HORT FOLLOWED AN ESSENTIALLY NATURALISTIC METHOD. INDEED, THEY PRIDED THEMSELVES ON TREATING THE TEXT OF THE N.T. AS THEY WOULD THAT OF ANY OTHER BOOK, MAKING LITTLE OR NOTHING OF INSPIRATION AND PROVIDENCE.** ‘For ourselves,’ Hort wrote, ‘we dare not introduce considerations which could not reasonably be applied to other texts, supposing them to have documentary attestation of equal amount, variety, and antiquity.’ ... **LIKE GRIESBACH THEY RULED OUT IN ADVANCE ANY POSSIBILITY OF THE PROVIDENTIAL PRESERVATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT THROUGH THE USAGE OF BELIEVERS** (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, pp. 65,66).

The apostasy of Westcott and Hort is also evident in their attitude toward a Christ-denying Unitarian who was invited to participate. George Vance Smith, minister of St. Saviour’s Gate Unitarian Chapel, York, had equal vote along with the other committee members, although he had plainly and publicly denied the deity of Jesus Christ. After he participated in a communion service with the other revisers, a letter was published in *The Times* (July 11, 1870) in which he proudly declared that though he had received communion, he had refused to recite the Creed since he would not compromise his “principles” as one who denied the deity of Jesus Christ. A public outcry ensued, but Westcott and Hort and some of the other revisers threatened to resign if Smith was not allowed to participate! Unitarian Smith later gloried in the fact that many changes made in the English Revision better reflected his own wicked views on Jesus Christ. He understood that the critical text and the modern versions support doctrinal heresy better than the Received Text.

The theories of modern textual criticism and the rejection of the Received Text were fathered in this rationalistic atmosphere.

Griesbach and Westcott and Hort are only three of the fathers of modern textual criticism that worked from a rationalistic position toward the Bible. In the article "Textual Criticism and Infidelity," I deal with the other important textual critics of the 19th century.

When we come to the 20th century, we find that nothing has changed. The field is still dominated overwhelmingly by unbelievers who deny the supernatural infallibility of the Bible. Consider, for example, the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament. CARLO MARTINI, who joined the UBS Greek N.T. editorial committee in 1967, is the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Milan. He is a professor at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, which, in addition to Roman Catholic heresies, promotes the theory of evolution and the heretical documentary views of biblical inspiration, etc. He is President of the Council of European Bishop's Conferences. A Time magazine article reported that Martini brought together a syncretistic convocation of over 100 religious leaders from around the world to promote a new age, one-world religion. In addressing this meeting, Mikhail Gorbachev said, "We need to synthesize a new religion for thinking men that will universalize that religion for the world and lead us into a new age." Like Pope John Paul II, Martini is a radical ecumenist and syncretist who is striving to bring all denominations and religions into a "Catholic" unity. The Bible calls this "Mystery Babylon." EUGENE NIDA is the father of the heretical dynamic equivalency theory of Bible translation. He believes God's revelation in the Bible "involved limitations" and "is not absolute" and that the words of the Bible "are in a sense nothing in and of themselves" (Nida, *Message and Mission*, 1960, pp. 222-228). He does not believe the Bible is written "in a Holy Ghost language." He believes the record of Jacob wrestling with the Angel was not a literal event. He denies the substitutionary blood atonement of Christ (Nida, *Theory and Practice*, 1969, p. 53). He denies that Christ died to satisfy God's justice. He believes the blood of the cross was merely symbolic of Christ's death and is never used in the Bible "in the sense of propitiation." BRUCE METZGER believes Moses did not write the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy was not written until 700 years before Christ, the Old Testament is a mixture of "myth, legend, and history," the record of the worldwide flood of Noah's day is exaggerated, the book of Job is a folktale, the miracle accounts about Elijah and Elisha contain "legendary elements," Isaiah was written by Isaiah plus two or three unknown men who wrote centuries later, the record of Jonah is a "legend," Daniel does not contain supernatural prophecy, Paul did not write the Pastoral Epistles, Peter did not write 2 Peter, etc. All of these unbelieving lies can be found in the notes to the Reader's Digest Condensed Bible, which are written by Metzger, and in the New Oxford Annotated Bible, of which Metzger is a co-editor. KURT ALAND denied the verbal inspiration of the Bible and wanted to see all denominations united into one "body" by the acceptance of a new ecumenical canon of Scripture which would take into account the Catholic apocryphal books (*The Problem of the New Testament Canon*, pp. 6,7,30-33).

(In my new book *Myths about Modern Bible Versions*, I have given lengthy quotes from the writings of these and many other men who are influential in textual criticism and the modern translations in this century, including George Vance Smith, Philip Schaff, Ezra Abbot, Joseph Thayer, Caspar Rene Gregory, Walter Bowie, Edgar Goodspeed, James Moffatt, C.H. Dodd, Eugene Nida, Robert Bratcher, William Barclay, F.F. Bruce, Frederic Kenyon, Ernest Colwell, Frederick Conybeare, Samuel Driver, Gerhard Kittel, Kirsopp Lake, J.B. Phillips, Henry Wheeler Robinson, and Hermann von Soden.)

It is true that some theologically orthodox men have adopted the theories of modern textual criticism, but they did not develop them. When a man goes to an Evangelical or Fundamentalist seminary and studies textual criticism, what textbooks does he normally use? He will use books by Bruce Metzger, Frederic Kenyon, Kurt Aland, F.F. Bruce, etc. I have visited Bible colleges and seminaries all over the country and these are the books that are commonly sold in the bookstores. All of these men, and the overwhelming majority of the other men who have developed the theories of modern textual criticism, are rationalists who deny the infallibility of the Scriptures, who hold the heretical documentary views of the Old Testament, etc. Evangelicals and Baptists who have promoted textual criticism did not develop it themselves, but merely received it from the

hands of the Griesbachs, Kenyons, Metzgers, and Alands, and have passed it along as the most up-to-date scientific thought. This does not really surprise me. Sadly, most men, even preachers, do not carefully and prayerfully analyze what they are taught in a Bible institution. And most theologically educated men today would prefer to remain ignorant of the Received Text-KJV position than bear the reproach of being in that “obscurantist” camp.

That brings us to the very serious problem that most colleges and seminaries do not teach anything about the defense of the Received Text (apart from a false caricature of it). Thus most men who graduate from these institutions, while assuming they know both sides of the textual debate, only know one side. Most Bible college and seminary graduates today have never read the works of John Burgon, Edward Miller, Edward Hills, Terance Brown, Donald Waite, or other scholarly defenders of the King James Bible and its Received Text. Dozens of men have shared their testimony with me that they were not exposed to both sides of the issue of Bible texts and versions during their Bible training. Only later did they come into appreciation of a sound defense of the KJV-TR when they studied the aforementioned men (and many others) for themselves instead of depending upon the caricatures of them provided by their Bible college or seminary teachers.

“ECLECTIC TEXT MAN”: I recently corresponded with a friend regarding your articles of March 30 and following. I will tell you what I told him (and with which he was in complete agreement): on issues other than the KJV/TR, you have indeed written some worthwhile things. If you recall, our correspondence began when I wrote you perhaps 5 years ago to commend you for your book on the SDAs published by Challenge Press. When I was on the mailing list of your news service, I downloaded and printed off for my files numerous articles (I think particularly of stuff regarding Graham, and Promise Keepers; in fact, I wish that you would write a book on Billy Graham, tracing and exposing his practical and doctrinal errors). So, I do not despise your literary productions or hold your mental and intellectual capacities in contempt. I know first hand the exhausting labor of careful research and writing for publication. And as a missionary myself, I appreciate the nature of your labors in that capacity.

DAVID CLOUD: Thanks for those comments. I had forgotten that you wrote to me about the SDA book. I could not remember how we first began communicating. The harshness of our communication on the Bible version topic created a mental block, I guess. As for a book on Billy Graham, a large section of the new book *Evangelicals and Rome* (at the printer) is dedicated to him, and I do trace some of the origins of his compromise.

“ECLECTIC TEXT MAN”: However, I do think on this one issue--Bible texts and versions--that you are like an airplane on a long-distance flight: you started just a degree or two off course--barely perceptible--and are now, after many "hours" of "flying time" very seriously off course and far from your proper destination.

DAVID CLOUD: That's a powerful illustration, but I don't believe you are right. In fact, I believe the opposite is true. I believe I started out off the mark because of some wrong instruction in a Greek course at Bible school and I have been flying ever closer to the proper destination of the preserved Word of God ever since. I have cried out to the Lord for wisdom and guidance about this subject as much as any Bible doctrine I have studied. That does not mean I am not deceived, of course. Better men than I have been deceived, but a man must trust the Lord and His promises (John 7:17; 8:31-32), and I do.

“ECLECTIC TEXT MAN”: As for myself, I recognize that we of this generation do not have a “corner” on the truth (historically, most generations view themselves as vastly superior to their predecessors in knowledge), and that great men of God of the past are not likely to have strayed far from the truth on so crucial an issue as the nature of inspiration and the question of Biblical preservation. I ask myself: if this KJVO/TRO view is true, why did no great conservative

theologian in the English-speaking world pick up on it? Why no great conservative OT or NT scholar, or fundamentalist Baptist? I examine the writings of Spurgeon and Gill, of Broadus and Carroll, of Warfield, Machen and Wilson, Torrey, Scrivener, and even Burgon. To a man (and I could list many more), they all recognized that no translation can be infallible, and that the TR, eg. was not an unalterably exact copy of the infallible original NT. True, these men were not themselves inspired oracles, and were subject to various errors in Bible interpretation, but . . . is it reasonable to suppose that they ALL, EVERYONE, fell into gross error on this crucial matter? Are we the only generation with the true light on this fundamental issue?

DAVID CLOUD: You repeat this frequently because it is at the heart of your argument. I would like to make a lengthy reply to explain why I reject your view:

(1) I agree that, speaking in general, true men of God in the past have not strayed from the truth; but when you refer to men of old, you refer mostly to men who lived in relatively recent times. Bible-believing men of one, two, three, four, and five centuries ago did not doubt the Received Text as some do today. Those who are following modern textual criticism are the ones following the innovation, the ones taking the new path, the ones removing the old landmarks. Kurt Aland, no friend of infallible inspiration, admits that “every theologian of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (and not just the exegetical scholars) worked from an edition of the Greek text of the New Testament which was regarded as the ‘revealed text.’ This idea of verbal inspiration ... which the orthodoxy of both Protestant traditions maintained so vigorously was applied to the Textus Receptus with all of its errors, including textual modifications of an obviously secondary character (as we recognize them today)” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 6,7).

Kurt Aland, one of the most influential textual critics of this century, boldly claims that the Received Text is full of errors, but he is a rationalist who does not believe the Bible is the supernaturally inspired Word of God to begin with. He rejects the orthodox view of verbal inspiration as it was held by men of God in centuries past; it is little surprise that he rejects the view of divine preservation that was espoused by those same men. What I find very strange is that your position is very close to that of rationalists like Kurt Aland and Bruce Metzger and you have a very similar attitude toward men like me (who still believe the same doctrine of the Bible that men of old believed) that the Aland-Metzger crowd has. **ALAND ACKNOWLEDGES THAT BEFORE THE RISE OF MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM MEN OF GOD APPLIED DIVINE PRESERVATION DIRECTLY TO THE RECEIVED TEXT.** I believe those men of old were right and the Alands and Metzgers of our day are dead wrong. I don’t accept their so-called science because it is not true science. They cannot prove their theories of textual criticism; their theories (and they are nothing more than that) have been in a constant state of flux for 200 years; and in fact those theories are contrary to what the Bible itself teaches us.

Returning to the subject of what men of God of old believed, when the great confessions of faith were written in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Protestants and Baptists of that day claimed that God had preserved the Scriptures infallibly. They were holding a King James Bible and were pointing to the Received Text when they made those claims. For example, the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1742) stated:

“The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old) and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages are, therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.”

The Greek and Hebrew which the 18th century Philadelphia Baptists called the preserved, pure Word of God was the Received Text underlying the King James Bible.

The Orthodox Creed of 1679 was written by a group of General Baptists in England, with a desire to emphasize doctrines that were held in common by all Bible-believing Christians. The following is what they believed about the Bible:

“And by the Holy Scriptures we understand the canonical books of the Old and New Testament, as they are now translated into our English mother-tongue, of which there hath never been any doubt of their verity and authority in the protestant churches of Christ to this day. All which are given by the inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life” (*Baptist Confessions, Covenants, and Catechisms*, Broadman & Holman, 1996).

It appears to me that these 17th-century English-speaking Christians accepted the King James Bible and its Received Text as the preserved Word of God! Aland and other textual critics have admitted the same.

I stand where Baptists of old stood, and I reject the modern textual critics, their rationalistic, unbelieving theories, and the texts and versions built upon those theories.

For centuries, Bible-believing people did not express reservations about the authenticity or infallibility of the Received Text. It was left for the 19th-century rationalistic textual critics to deny the preservation of the Received Text. Constantine Tischendorf, for example, looked upon his task as “the struggle to regain the original form of the New Testament” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 126). His error, like that of other 19th-century textual critics, was in failing to recognize God’s promise of preservation. Had he believed the Bible’s own testimony, he would have known by faith that the New Testament did not need to be recovered because it was not lost!

You said, “I ask myself: if this KJVO/TRO view is true, why did no great conservative theologian in the English-speaking world pick up on it?” My reply is that countless “great conservative theologians” and millions of humble Christians in past centuries accepted the KJV-TR as the preserved Word of God without hesitation. Why have so many rejected that position in this century, you ask. There are many reasons. One is that we have descended into a fearful apostasy since the turn of the century and even more so since the 1950s with the onslaught of New Evangelicalism. Many men have carefully documented how that New Evangelicalism has permeated the scholarly realms of the Evangelical Christian world with an attitude of rationalism toward the Bible that is very close to that of the Modernists in some aspects.

Even today, though, large numbers of godly, scholarly, Bible-believing men accept the KJV-TR as the preserved Word of God without hesitation. That you can name many men who reject this does not change the fact of it.

(2) It simply is not true that no scholarly men (even by your definition) have defended the Received Text without qualification, and you should stop trying to make that claim. Terance Brown, former secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society in England, is one example. Dr. Edward F. Hills is another. There is not two cents worth of difference between the position he held and that I hold. Though it is true that he allowed for some very minor possible revision of the Received Text, his is a thousand miles closer to my position than to yours. Dr. Donald Waite is another. He is a great scholar and believes almost exactly what I believe about Bible texts and versions. Dr. Thomas Strouse is another. In my book *For Love of the Bible* I have listed dozens of men in the 19th and 20th centuries who defended the Received or Traditional Text, and though some of them believed it might need minor modifications, many of them did not call for changing it. They all applied Bible preservation to the Received Text in general and rejected the modern textual criticism position as heretical. I agree with them. Those are my friends. Their position is far closer to my own than to yours. I agree with them far more than I agree with you, even with those who believed that the TR needs a little revision, because at least they boldly and unreservedly and unhesitatingly opposed modern textual criticism and accepted the Bible that has been used by

God's people generally through the centuries is the preserved Word of God. You, on the other hand, think that the Received Text (which is the Bible that was used generally through the centuries) is a mere accident of history and is very corrupt.

(3) That brings me to a point that has always puzzled me about you and some of your friends. You make no distinction between the defense of the Received Text and that of the modern critical text. When men point to the rationalism of the textual critics and defend the Received Text, you try to change the subject and discuss, instead, whether or not the KJV is advanced revelation. The only "enemy" that you seem to be concerned about is that dastardly, obviously unscholarly person who believes the KJV and its Received Text is the preserved Word of God. In the above paragraph, for example, you lumped together John Burgon and B.B. Warfield. Burgon defended the Traditional Text and strongly opposed the critical textual theories. Warfield, on the other hand, accepted the critical textual theories almost whole hog. (Theodore Letis makes a strong case in his book *The Ecclesiastical Text* that Warfield's acceptance of textual criticism paved the way for Princeton's quick slide into Modernism.) They did not believe the same thing, though you lump them all together.

You spend much energy tearing down faith in the King James Bible, but what do you leave it its place? What do you give God's people? You tell them they can find the preserved Word of God (though never perfectly, of course) with the assistance of the constantly fluctuating, even more rationalistic field of textual criticism. You tell them they can depend upon unbelievers like Bruce Metzger and Kurt Aland and Unitarians like Caspar Rene Gregory.

The position that I believe without a shadow of doubt to be heresy is the modern textual criticism position. There is no doubt in my mind that the 19th-century textual critics who built the foundation of textual criticism were heretics and that the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts (and others that display a similar text) contain doctrinal corruption that was introduced in the second and third centuries and that the modern texts and versions are merely reproducing that corruption (by leaving out the word "God" in 1 Timothy 3:16, etc.). There is no doubt in my mind, not even a glimmer, that the Received Text is the preserved Word of God. I look at history and can see that God Himself gave me the Received Text. I don't see Erasmus or Tyndale or the KJV committee. I see God. It is not easy to trace the history of the Bible in the first thousand years of church history, but the history is plain since the 14th century, and I see that God has given me the Received Text. That leaves it only for me to decide what to do with the very small and minor differences between various editions of the TR. Each man must make his own decision about this. I like the conclusion reached by Dr. Edward F. Hills by in the 1940s:

"The texts of the several editions of the Textus Receptus were God-guided. They were set up under the leading of God's special providence. Hence the differences between them were kept down to a minimum. ... But what do we do in these few places in which the several editions of the Textus Receptus disagree with one another? Which text do we follow? The answer to this question is easy. We are guided by the common faith. Hence we favor that form of the Textus Receptus upon which more than any other God, working providentially, has placed the stamp of His approval, namely, the King James Version, or, more precisely, the Greek text underlying the King James Version. This text was published in 1881 by the Cambridge University Press under the editorship of Dr. Scrivener, and there have been [many] reprints..." (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, pp. 222,223).

There is your scholar with a Harvard doctorate, and he believed the position of faith leads us to the Received Text underlying the KJV.

(4) I am not an expert on what the "great conservative theologians" such as those you listed believe about Bible texts and versions. I do know that some of the old commentators that I enjoy, men like Matthew Henry and Harry Ironside, were not hasty to correct the Received Text as the modern commentators are. That aside, I strongly disagree with your narrow definition of a "great conservative theologian." I know many men that I consider great conservative theologians who

believe what I believe about Bible preservation. Among these are Dr. Donald Waite, D.O. Fuller, Bob Barnett, Marion Reynolds, Perry Rockwood, Mark Buch, William Aberhard, Terence Brown, M.R. Dehaan, Roger Voegtlin, Ron Tottingham, Dr. Russell Dennis, Clinton Branine, Frank Logsdon, Jack Moorman, Stephen Scott-Pearson, Myron Cedarholm, Harold Sightler, M. James Hollowood, Allen Dickerson, Robert Hitchens, Lee Henise, John Cereghin, Micky Carter, Sam Davison, Bruce Cummons, George Anderson, Charles Turner, Ian Paisley, Peter Van Kleeck, Don Jasmin, John Thackway, Robert Sargent, Kirk Divietro, Bruce Lackey, and Dr. Thomas Strouse. These are just few examples of the hundreds I could mention. I consider all of these men great conservative theologians, the equal spiritually and biblically to the men you listed. These men have build churches and missionary enterprises, established schools, published materials to edify the saints, contended for the faith once delivered to the saints. That's the definition of a great conservative theologian in my book.

(5) Many of the men you mentioned (Spurgeon, Gill, Carroll, Machen, Wilson, Torrey) did not really get involved with the textual debate one way or the other, beyond dabbling with it when commenting on various Bible passages. For example, there is no evidence that I know of (and I have corresponded about this with Dr. Peter Masters who pastors Spurgeon's church today) that Spurgeon got involved in the textual debate. He believed the KJV could be revised in some places, but he strongly rejected the English Revised Version when it appeared. He died shortly thereafter, so we don't know what would have happened had he lived. To my knowledge, he did not write about the Westcott-Hort Greek text in any detail.

(6) Also, most of the men in more recent decades of the type that you listed have merely accepted the theories of the rationalistic modern textual critics without any apparent to analyze it biblically; they are not themselves textual critics and have not taken the time or effort to develop their own Bible-believing theories of textual transmission. Most of them have not even written on the subject. What they believed, therefore, one way or the other is of little note. This includes men like Carroll, Broadus, Machen, and Torrey. If it so happens that one of these men did write a bit about textual criticism, that does not disprove the point I am making. I am simply saying that a large number of the recognized biblical scholars of the type that you are listing have not done this. No matter how sound these men were in the faith (that's another subject), they did not produce their own textual criticism but merely adopted that of the standard critics.

(7) I am not very impressed by what the recognized scholars of any century have believed. The apostles and pastors of the early churches, for the most part, were not "scholars." They were humble men of common intelligence who were called and gifted of God to preach and defend His Word. The Apostles established churches, not universities. It is not scholarship itself that is the problem; it is the heart of man. I understand too well the corrupt nature of fallen mankind and his pride and the deceitfulness of satanic heresies and false teaching to have much confidence in "recognized scholarship." "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25). There were multiplied tens of thousands of godly preachers in past centuries, as well as today, who, though not recognized scholars, accept the King James Bible and its Received Text as the divinely preserved Word of God, who do not try to change it, who do not believe it needs to be changed, who are content to study it diligently and to preach it to a needy world. You despise that and repeatedly point to the scholars, the scholars. I, though, in light of many Bible warnings such as that of Matt. 11:25 and 1 Cor. 1:26-29, am not surprised that many scholars do not know where or what the preserved Word of God is. It can only be recognized by faith, and scholars rarely work on the basis of faith. Dr. Edward F. Hills was one of those rare scholars who worked strictly from a position of faith, and it led him to reject much that he was taught in the field of textual criticism. Zane Hodges, Wilbur Pickering, Jay Green, and Alfred Martin have also approached textual criticism at the scholarly level by faith, though not as consistently (in my opinion) as Hills did. Hodges, Pickering, and Martin at least have understood that modern textual criticism operates from a position of rationalism, that it is an enemy of the

New Testament faith, and they have boldly rejected it. I praise the Lord for their stand. I do not find that zeal against the heresy of modern textual criticism in your writings on this subject.

(8) Also, I do believe the Lord has given men new understanding about this issue in recent decades because the need is greater. Very few men took the Bible version issue seriously in English until the publication of the New International Version in the 1970s. There was a flurry of battle in English at the publication of the ERV at the end of the 1800s, but the ERV soon faded away, as did the battle. There was a flurry of concern about the Revised Standard Version in the 1950s, but that concern rarely got beyond the obvious theological modernism surrounding the RSV. The KJV simply was not challenged seriously, and therefore among the common Bible-believing preacher the Bible-version matter was not a serious practical problem, until the NIV came along (followed close on its heel by a multiplicity of competing versions). When I studied the history of the defense of the KJV from 1800 to present for my book *For Love of the Bible*, I learned that there was no defense unless there was a threat. As textual critics published their theories and new texts in the late 18th and 19th centuries, there was always a controversy stemming from opposition by those who defended the KJV and its Received Text. Those controversies were not widely published, because the common Christian was almost completely unaffected by the critical texts (and the new translations that were made from time to time based on them) preliminary to Westcott and Hort. There was an ongoing defense, though, of the Received Text throughout the 19th century. When we come to the 1880s, that defense grew strong and widespread. It was not just Burgon. It was a wide variety of men who opposed the Westcott-Hort Greek text and the ERV. They opposed it on all sorts of grounds, of course, but many of them opposed it on the same grounds that I do today. I felt a very strong kinship with some of the 19th-century TR defenders that I studied. A couple of years ago I did some research at the British Library on this subject, and I was thrilled by some of the materials I found there. I look forward to meeting some of those old warriors in Heaven. They had their battle. We have ours today.

Getting back to my point, the theological battle is not the same from decade to decade or from century to century, and the Lord leads His people in the particular battles that they must face. I am not surprised that men in the 1940s did not understand the apostasy of the modern English versions and the critical Greek text as keenly as many men do today, because it simply was not the type of issue that it is today. The critical Greek text had very little practical impact then upon the common Christian. Most churches still used the KJV; most Christian bookstores still promoted the KJV above other versions. That is not true today. I do not believe it is strange that it was in the 1970s (the decade of the NIV) that God raised up men and organizations such as the Which Bible Society (I praise God for the late David Otis Fuller and the help he has been in this preacher's life, and I do not take lightly those who mock him) and Bible for Today in the States, and the Bible League and the Trinitarian Bible Society in England (both of which had existed from the 1800s but became powerful voices for the defense of the KJV-TR especially from the 1970s forward) to defend the King James Bible and to oppose the onslaught of modern versions and the textual criticism that produced them and to republish the old writings defending the KJV and the Received Text. What they have done, in part, was reprint the materials that were used to oppose the English Revised Version and the Westcott-Hort Greek text in late 19th century England. That those materials are still largely relevant to the textual battle today is evidence that the Bentley-Bengel-Griesbach-Lachmann-Westcott-Hort theories still reign even though many of them have long since been discredited even by the textual critics.

Again, I praise the Lord for the help I have received personally from Which Bible Society, Bible for Today, the Bible League, and the Trinitarian Bible Society. Their work has encouraged the hearts of tens of thousands of preachers. If you think that it is heresy to believe the KJV-TR is the preserved Word of God, you do well to be concerned, because the number of preachers who believe that is growing rapidly. For my small part, I am going to do everything I can by God's grace to see that the number grows even larger.

“ECLECTIC TEXT MAN”: And then a consideration of the facts of the manuscripts and printed editions:

1. No two TR editions are exactly alike (differences between them number as many as 2,777 places).
2. No TR edition corresponds exactly to the KJV (the closest differs in over 250 places--see Acts 20:28, e.g.)
3. The standard TR editions differ from “the majority text” in over 1,800 places.
4. No Greek NT manuscript corresponds exactly to any TR edition (the differences of the closest are surely in the hundreds—perhaps thousands-- of places).
5. The TR contains readings found in NO Greek manuscripts (at least 20 such readings).
6. In his 2nd to 5th editions, Erasmus made numerous changes based on additional information. He certainly did not believe his text was “final.” Why, then, should we?

I look at these facts and must conclude: there are places, certainly, where the TR does not read precisely as the originals did, and that the evidence should be examined and alterations made (as Erasmus himself did) when there is sufficient grounds for alteration.

DAVID CLOUD: Why not make alterations like Erasmus did? Because, praise the Lord, we have a much better advantage today than Erasmus had at the dawn of the Reformation. The march of history has brought some advances (and many degradations, as well), and it is foolish to argue that things should be in every way as they have been in times past. Before printing, God’s people had to laboriously copy the Scriptures out by hand and pay huge sums of money for handwritten manuscripts. Printing has changed all of that. Printing also standardized the Bible text in ways that was impossible in centuries past. We who live in the age of printing have a great advantage about the Bible over those who lived before it. We can own small, portable copies of the entire Bible containing loads of invaluable helps, such as built-in concordances, dictionaries, explanatory notes, and cross-references. The division of verses and chapters alone is invaluable, and that did not come until the 16th century. I believe God is in control of history, and that many of the problems Erasmus and others of his day faced we do not have.

You seem to think that it would be absolutely impossible to have all of the words of God. I don’t believe that. Jesus Christ said man lives by every word of God. The last chapter of Revelation warns that we are not to take away from or add to the words of that book (and I believe, by implication, the rest of the Bible). Those warnings and promises cause me to expect to be able to have all of the words of God.

As to answering your specific questions, many scholarly KJV-TR men of God (including Edward Hills, Donald Waite, and Jack Moorman) have answered them and have analyzed the tiny differences between various editions of the TR and the various editions of the KJV. I won’t try to go into that here.

I will simply say that Dr. Edward Hills, who understood the problems very well, did not see them as insurmountable as you do. You are making a mountain out of a molehill. The following was his wise conclusion. I have thought much about his solution and have compared it with the solution you propose, and I have accepted his as the one most consistent with what God promises me in His Word. If it is not considered sufficiently scholarly, that bothers me not in the least.

“The texts of the several editions of the Textus Receptus were God-guided. They were set up under the leading of God’s special providence. Hence the differences between them were kept down to a minimum. ... But what do we do in these few places in which the several editions of the Textus Receptus disagree with one another? Which text do we follow? The answer to this question is easy. We are guided by the common faith. Hence we favor that form of the Textus Receptus upon which more than any other God, working providentially, has placed the stamp of His approval, namely, the King James Version, or, more precisely, the Greek text underlying the King James Version. This

text was published in 1881 by the Cambridge University Press under the editorship of Dr. Scrivener, and there have been [many] reprints..." (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, pp. 222,223).

I also must say that I believe you are being somewhat disingenuous in the above statement. You said, "I look at these facts and must conclude: there are places, certainly, where the TR does not read precisely as the originals did, and that the evidence should be examined and alterations made (as Erasmus himself did) when there is sufficient grounds for alteration." The problem here is that you don't believe the Received Text is the preserved Word of God even in a general sense. The man who holds that the Received Text is the preserved Word of God must deal with the type of problem that you described, but that is absolutely nothing compared with the problems involved with the critical text. The truly significant differences between the editions of the Received Text and the King James Bible amount to just a few words. The truly significant differences between the Received Text and the modern critical text amounts to literally thousands of words, including about four dozen entire verses, and those words and verses affect key doctrines like that of Christ's deity. (I have documented the doctrinal corruption of the modern critical text in the book *Myths about Modern Bible Versions* and in *Examining "The King James Only Controversy,"* which is at the Way of Life web site.) There is no reasonable comparison between the two sets of problems. Dr. Edward Hills described the contrast between the two sets of problems as the "maximum certainty" of the Received Text position vs. the "maximum uncertainty" of modern textual criticism (*The King James Version Defended*, p. 224).

"ECLECTIC TEXT MAN": And as for the KJV--how can it be an unalterably exact reproduction in English of the infallible original if --

DAVID CLOUD: First of all, who has said it is unalterable? I have never said that, and I do not believe that. You always tend to try to force the King James Bible defender into the fashion of someone who believes the KJV is advanced revelation, that it corrects the Greek and Hebrew, and that it has replaced the Greek and Hebrew. That is your own prejudice at work. Since you and those who are likeminded with you do it so consistently, I can only assume that it is a tactic to further some agenda.

To say that the KJV is an accurate, sufficient, and dependable translation of the preserved Scripture is not to say that it is unalterable or that it has replaced the Greek and Hebrew that holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. I don't believe God made a mistake when he gave the Scriptures in Greek and Hebrew. When translations are made into various languages, I believe they should be made from the Received Text if possible, meaning, if the translators are capable of working from Greek and Hebrew. (Many translations are made directly from English, even by the United Bible Societies.) I believe there are passages that might be translated more clearly in the KJV. It is a very old Bible, and it has undergone minor revisions since 1611, and I don't believe it would necessarily be wrong for it to be revised again. That is not to say that I believe it should be so modified, because I don't. There are other factors to consider, the chief of which is that I don't believe it is the time nor the place to make changes to the KJV. It was given to us in an hour of revival; I don't believe it can be replaced in an hour of apostasy. The point is, though, that I do not look upon the KJV as "an unalterably exact reproduction in English of the infallible original." I don't know where you got that idea, but it is not mine. I look upon the KJV as an accurate translation of the infallible original.

"ECLECTIC TEXT MAN": 1. It is based on a Greek text which in some places at least does not correspond to what the evidence says the original said.

DAVID CLOUD: This matter was discussed by Dr. Edward Hills in his excellent book *The King James Version Defended*. It has been discussed by other scholarly men of God who are defenders of the KJV and the TR. No need to go over it here. Even if one were uncertain about those few

places in the KJV (and I, for one, am not), he would still be left with a Bible that is very close to perfect, which is something your principles can never give. In fact, you mock such a thing.

“ECLECTIC TEXT MAN”: Then there are other problems: why this translation, and no other? This strikes me as absolutely arbitrary. Why not Luther’s German, or Jerome’s Vulgate, or Reina and Valera’s Spanish, or Tyndale’s English? Or the Geneva Bible? Or the Revisers’ English? (I think I can make a better case for an infallible Vulgate than can be made for an infallible KJV, using the same kinds of arguments employed; of course, I wouldn’t believe it infallible, but a better case can be made than for the KJV!)

DAVID CLOUD: Why not Luther’s German? It is an excellent translation (some of the revisions aside). It is a good translation of the Received Text (though there are some minor textual differences between it and the KJV). (In my book *Rome and the Bible* I give the history of the German, French, Spanish, and Italian Bibles, as well as the English Bible from Wycliffe to Tyndale.) I do believe the English Bible is more important than the German Bible, though, and that is obvious from any study of the last 400 years of history. The English language is not merely another language. It alone has become the world language of the modern era. One of the men who helped us plant the church in Asia was a German-speaking brother from Switzerland. When he travels outside of Western Europe, he can communicate in German to very few people, but he can communicate in the world language of English to many people wherever he goes. This is a large subject in itself, and I will not go further into it here, but this is my answer to your question. It all appears very simple to me.

Why not Tyndale’s or the Geneva? Because those were formed in the early stages of a process of revision that resulted in the KJV. By the way, I have noticed that you keep going over and over the same ground, as if you have never been answered. I answered this in my articles “Preservation Is Missing in Standard Works on Textual Criticism” and “Problems with Bible Preservation” (March 30, 1999, see the Bible Version section of the Fundamental Baptist Information Service Topical List at the Way of Life web site – <http://wayoflife.org/~dcloud>).

Why the King James Bible instead of some other English version? The King James Bible is also not merely another translation. I don’t know of any other translation that has undergone the depth of purification that the King James Bible went through, beginning with Tyndale’s masterly translation in the early 16th century through almost a full century of revision that resulted in the Authorized Version of 1611. The KJV committee (composed of more than 50 learned men who labored for seven years) thoroughly reviewed and revised an already highly purified translation.

Why not the Reviser’s English? Are you serious? Because it was based on the corrupt Westcott-Hort text and, even apart from its textual corruption, it was what C.H. Spurgeon and many godly men of that day called “the blunder Bible” because of its ponderous English. In brief, it was a poor translation of the wrong Greek text.

Why not the Latin Vulgate? First of all because we don’t speak Latin today. Do the people you teach and preach to speak Latin? It is obvious that your position on Bible texts and versions has almost no practicality to it. Second, the Latin Vulgate you are referring to was apostate Rome’s Bible and the Roman Latin Bibles typically contained many of the doctrinal corruptions evident in the Vaticanus manuscript. This is not surprising because Jerome, the translator of the first official Roman Latin vulgate, one of the fathers of the Catholic Church, was a heretic and he incorporated corruptions promulgated by Origen and other heretics. There were other Latin Bibles, of course, in addition to those Rome chose. My book *Rome and the Bible* contains much information about the Latin Vulgate as well as the old Latin texts.

“ECLECTIC TEXT MAN”: And there is no standard KJV edition, but only numerous editions varying in many details from each other. The “original” KJV manuscript is lost, so we cannot appeal directly to it.

DAVID CLOUD: You joke, surely. The differences are EXTREMELY slight, almost inconsequential. It is a tiny problem, to be sure, but very tiny, and many scholarly KJV-TR defenders have dealt with it. I won’t try to repeat their research here. By the way, it really does appear that you delight in finding alleged errors in Bibles.

“ECLECTIC TEXT MAN”: And I won’t even go into the linguistic problem--or rather, impossibility--of there being exact correspondence between one language and another in meaning. These considerations of fact and logic (along with a knowledge of the Scripture doctrine of inspiration) have led me honestly to conclude that this KJVO/TRO doctrine is not sound or true, a conclusion reached also by many other conservative writers who have examined the issue.

DAVID CLOUD: How does the knowledge of the Scripture doctrine of inspiration lead you to believe that the King James Bible and every edition of the Received Text and every other Bible that exists past and present has errors? That is a strange statement. The doctrine of verbal plenary inspiration does not lead me to think that every Bible will automatically contain errors. To the contrary! When Paul wrote that Timothy had known the Holy Scriptures from a child (2 Timothy 3:15), he was not saying that Timothy’s parents had the original Hebrew and Aramaic autographs of the Old Testament. Obviously, Timothy had learned the Scriptures from copies of the original manuscripts, very possibly even from a translation. Yet, the Holy Spirit casts no doubt upon the authenticity and infallible preservation of the Scriptures that Timothy’s parents had in their possession. I know that the King James Bible is a translation, and I know the limitations of translation. I lived in foreign countries for almost 12 years. I repeat that I do not believe the English of the KJV has replaced the Greek and Hebrew that God spake through holy men of old. I believe that 2 Peter 1:21 is referring to Greek and Hebrew, not to English or any other modern language. I believe God knew what He was doing when He delivered the Scriptures into those particular languages. I believe He prepared those languages specifically for the reception of the divine Scripture. I believe in learning Greek and Hebrew. I believe in using every good tool that God has so graciously provided for the study of His Word in the original languages. I believe in Greek/Hebrew lexicons and technical commentaries as long as they are sound (but one must also understand that many of the men who produced the same are dangerous heretics). But I also know the Holy Spirit has an earnest desire to see that the Word of God dwells richly among men, and I know the importance of the English language for the past 400 years of church history. The King James Bible is not just another translation. I agree with Alexander McClure (D.D., 1808-1865), who wrote a series of biographical sketches of the King James Bible translators called *The Translators Revived*. Dr. McClure had a very high regard for the King James Bible and did not believe it could ever be replaced. I believe he had a much better sense of the importance and authority of the King James Bible than you do. There are many 19th century books like McClure’s that document the exalted nature of the KJV. It is a crime that they have not been reprinted and the average Christian, yea the average preacher, today knows almost nothing about the priceless heritage of his old English Bible. Some years ago I dedicated many months to delving into the history of the King James Bible, and it was an exceedingly profitable study. Instead of tearing down this rich heritage, like you do, I am rededicating myself here and now to exalting it. Consider an excerpt from McClure:

“[T]he translation and printing of the Bible in English forms a most important event in modern history. Far beyond any other translation, it has been, and is, and will be, to multitudes which none can number, the living oracle of God...

Thus it came to pass, that the English Bible received its present form, after a fivefold revision of the translation as it was left in 1537 by Tyndale and Rogers. During this interval of seventy-four years,

it had been slowly ripening, till this last, most elaborate, and thorough revision under King James matured the work for coming centuries.

The English language had passed through many and great changes, and had at last reached the very height of its purity and strength. The Bible has ever since been the grand English classic. It is still the noblest monument of the power of the English speech. It is the pattern and standard of excellence therein.

As to the capability of those men, we may say again, that, by the good providence of God, their work was undertaken in a fortunate time. Not only had the English language, that singular compound, then ripened to its full perfection, but **the study of Greek, and of the oriental tongues, and of rabbinical lore, had then been carried to a greater extent in England than ever before or since. ... all the colleges of Great Britain and America, even in this proud day of boastings, could not bring together the same number of divines equally qualified by learning and piety for the great undertaking.** ... It would be impossible to convene out of any one Christian denomination, or out of all, a body of translators, on whom the whole Christian community would bestow such confidence as is reposed upon that illustrious company, or who would prove themselves as deserving of such confidence.

But this blessed book is so far complete and exact, that the unlearned reader, being of ordinary intelligence, may enjoy the delightful assurance, that, if he study it in faith and prayer, and give himself up to its teachings, he shall not be confounded or misled as to any matter essential to his salvation and his spiritual good. **IT WILL AS SAFELY GUIDE HIM INTO ALL THE THINGS NEEDFUL FOR FAITH AND PRACTICE, AS WOULD THE ORIGINAL SCRIPTURES, IF HE COULD READ THEM, OR IF THEY COULD SPEAK TO HIM AS ERST THEY SPAKE TO THE HEBREW IN JERUSALEM, OR TO THE GREEK IN CORINTH.**

Nor is this any disparagement of the benefits of a critical knowledge of the original tongues. For while a good translation is the best commentary on the original Scriptures, the originals themselves are the best commentary on the translation. Passages somewhat obscure in the translation often become very plain when we recur to the original, because we then distinctly see what it was that the translators meant to say. ... It is only maintained, that **the common English reader enjoys, by the good providence of God, that which comes the nearest to the privilege of the classical scholar; and has a translation so exact, plain, and trustworthy, that he may follow it with implicit confidence as 'a light to his feet and a lamp to his paths.'**

Not that the utmost verbal perfection is claimed for the English Bible as it now stands. Some of its words have, in the lapse of time, gone out of common use; some have suffered a gradual change of meaning; and some which were in unexceptionable use two hundred years ago, are now considered as distasteful and indelicate. **But the number of such words is very small, considering the great size and age of the volume; and the retaining of them causes but little inconvenience, compared with the disadvantages of wholesale projectors of amendment volunteered by incompetent and irresponsible schemers** (Alexander McClure, *The Translators Revived*, 1855, pp. 11,59,61,63-66,235-239).

“ECLECTIC TEXT MAN”: I suggest that you step away for a time from this debate and focus on other matters. Perhaps the place and importance of the Latin Vulgate in Western Christianity (there is excellent material in Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, and in Smith's 4 vol. Bible Dictionary [by B. F. Westcott]. And Metzger's Early Versions has a good chapter. And perhaps the 3 vol. Cambridge History of the Bible; and Schaff's Church History; John Boys, the KJV translator, was the first Protestant scholar to advocate the value and merit of the Vulgate). Trace how the Vulgate benefited Western Christianity in the Middle Ages, noting all the vernacular versions based on it--Anglo-Saxon, Wycliffe, Waldensian, versions in French, German, Bohemian, and more--all before the Reformation. Note that Luther was converted reading a Vulgate Bible. Note the debt to the Vulgate our English theological vocabulary has: justify, sanctify, consecrate redemption, propitiation, pastor, conviction, etc. And even the debt of the KJV to the Vulgate (both directly and via its daughter version, the Rheims-Douay). And then ask: if this text was so terribly corrupt (and it often corresponds with the “Alexandrian” text-form), how could it have accomplished so many truly great things for the blessing of mankind and the glory of God? Such a study--not undertaken to “bash” the Vulgate, but to simply catalog how it was used by God for the benefit of sinners--such a study, I say, might cast a wholly different and unexpected light on the narrower KJV/TR issue.

DAVID CLOUD: I don't spend a large portion of my time with the Bible version debate, but I don't intend to step away from it at all. In fact, I am more convinced than ever that the Lord wants me to speak out on this to encourage other men in this wicked hour, and the letters I receive from God's people almost every day confirm me in this. If ever there were a time for men to defend the preserved Word of God, it is today. I will busy myself with that, because I believe it is much more profitable than your approach of trying to expose the alleged errors in every Bible.

As for studying the Latin Bible, I have already done that (though I want to do more). Why do you so consistently assume that the reason I don't accept your position is a lack of knowledge? I really doubt you have studied these issues any more diligently or extensively than I have, and it is tiresome to be treated after this fashion. I am sure you have read books that I have not read on this subject; but there is no doubt that I have also read many books that you have not read. The difference between us is not lack of knowledge on one part or the other; the difference is a lack of spiritual discernment on the part of one or the other of us (or both of us!) to understand the facts that we have studied. We look at the same facts in different ways. Let me get back to your challenge to study the transmission and influence of the Latin Bible. In the research for my book *Rome and the Bible*, which examines the transmission of the Bible through the centuries as well as Rome's attitude toward the Bible, I researched the history of the Latin Bible. I want to do more of this, but it is likely that I have already done as much as you have. I have read most of the materials that you listed (I have all except one of them in my library) plus many other books on the subject. I have done a lot of research into the Waldensian versions. I have many rare histories on the Waldensians that I have collected at the expense of thousands of dollars, plus dozens of more general church histories that deal with them, including Mosheim, Neander, Jones, Armitage, Schaff, Durant, etc. I have also focused much attention on Wycliffe's version and its influence. I have collected about a dozen volumes specifically dealing with Wycliffe and his Bible, not to mention many general histories that deal with it. I am in the process of doing more research into the particular Latin texts that Wycliffe used, and I have contacted some scholarly men recently in that connection and am in the process, the Lord willing, of obtaining more material that will assist me in this project. I have also studied the Tyndale era (which runs together with the older Wycliffe era) very extensively. I have dozens of volumes on that era. It fascinates me more than any other. Some years ago I spent a huge amount of money to purchase a massive 3-volume unabridged 17th century Foxes martyrology specifically because it contains much information about the Latin, French, German, and English Bibles (all of which is left out of the abridged editions). I have also done a lot of the type of research that you suggest at theological libraries such as Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia (I spent many entire days there during the years I lived in the Pacific Northwest).

In conclusion, communicating with you has deepened my conviction that modern textual criticism is heresy and that it is crucial to sound a warning to fundamental Baptists to turn away from it.

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